

149.
*The Ability of Christ to save, the Believer's
Comfort in the near Views of Eternity.*

A ✓
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the DEATH of

Mr. JONAS THURROWGOOD,

A Faithful Servant and MINISTER
of CHRIST,

W H O

Departed this Life, *July 2, 1753.* K

By BENJAMIN WALLIN.

Blessed are the Dead, who die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR, and Sold by G. KEITH,
at the Bible and Crown in Gracechurch Street. 1753.

[Price Six Pence.] 260

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Comfort in the hour of Eternity.

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S E R M O N

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Mr. JONAS THURLOWGOOD,

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Printed for the Author, and sold by G. KENT,
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2 TIM. ii. 12.

For I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

TH E S E words contain the ground of the Apostle's courage and joy, when he was under great sufferings, and when in the near views of eternity. The same consideration frequently rejoiced our late aged Friend, who was the Pastor of this Church, and particularly when the sorrows of death compassed him, and his life drew nigh unto the grave; he, therefore, chose this portion of Scripture to be insisted upon among you, after his decease.

A person further advanced in life, and of longer standing in the ministry, might have been thought a more suitable instrument on this mournful occasion; and, especially, since the days of our deceased brother were extended beyond the experience of most. Never-

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theless, at your earnest request, I appear to fulfil his desire: And of this you may be assured, that I am your fellow mourner, and sincerely sympathize with you under the present loss.

That the Apostle, when he wrote this epistle, was in expectation of his immediate departure, is plain from Chap. iv. 6. wherein he thus expresseth himself, *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* He was now a prisoner at Rome, in the time of Nero the emperor, whose cruelties against the christians are notorious; and by whom, as credible, though not sacred, history informeth us, this great Apostle was (a) beheaded in the year of our Lord 69. If so, that infamous persecutor (b), soon after appeared before God, who will surely avenge the blood of his saints.

However, for the sake of the gospel, whereunto he was appointed a preacher, Paul tells us, that he suffered these things. Nevertheless, saith he, *I am not ashamed:* q. d. “Notwithstanding these trials, I am not ashamed of the gospel, nor of my sufferings for its sake,

(a) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. ii. c. 24.

(b) To avoid a shameful punishment from the Roman Senate, who, for his base conduct, had declared him an enemy to the state, he, with the assistance of his secretary, destroyed himself. This was A. D. 71. Vid. Sueton. in Nero, c. 40. also, Univ. Hist. Vol. 14. p. 46.

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“fake; neither am I ashamed of my hope.
“The enemy, indeed, by these cruelties and
“threatnings, seeketh to abash and confound
“me: His view is to cause me to renounce
“my confidence, but, blessed be God, here-
“in he hath failed, for I am not ashamed;
“yea, though I am now in the immediate
“views of being slain for the testimony of
“Jesus, I glory in the gospel of this my Re-
“deemer, and lay down my life in full assu-
“rance of obtaining salvation by him: I am
“so far from being ashamed, that I even re-
“joice in these afflictions, knowing that there
“is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,
“which I shall receive from my Lord in the
“great day.” Now this boldness and triumph
is on the same foundation, on which every true
believer may rejoice, when in trouble, and
even in the prospect of death itself, as appear-
eth from the text, wherein the Apostle giveth
the reason of his confidence and joy. *For I
know, saith he, whom I have believed, and I am
persuaded that he is able to keep that which I
have committed unto him against that day.*

The method in which I shall endeavour to im-
prove this copious passage is as followeth, namely,

- I. I shall take notice of some things distinct
from what the Apostle grounds his con-
fidence upon, in which mankind are prone
to rest.

II. Set before you what I apprehend included in the Apostle's declaring his trust in Christ, at the present juncture.

III. Explain the knowledge which he assumeth, and which is proper to those who trust in Jesus.

IV. Consider the Apostle's persuasion concerning the Redeemer, in consequence of his acquaintance with him. And then,

V. Shew what there is in Christ to raise and confirm this persuasion in those who know him.

I. I am to consider some things which are distinct from the ground of the Apostle's courage, in which mankind are too prone to trust.

This I premise in the way to what is more directly expressed in the text, that none might flatter themselves in a groundless hope. And,

I. We see, that the foundation of the Apostle's confidence is not laid in the *mere mercy of God*. Some loose and unthinking persons, when put in mind of their vain and sinful life, and warned to provide against approaching death, presume on the benevolence and mercy of the Divine Being: They make no question but

but that, on calling upon God for mercy, when they are launching into the unseen world, they shall be saved; hence they are unconcerned about repentance, and faith in Christ; and pay no regard to the revelation of wrath to come. I would hope, that none who attend here are securing themselves in this ignorant and licentious presumption; but if any who sit under the word at this time should be amused with so unreasonable an expectation, let them know that the *goodness* of the Deity is consistent with his *justice*. The uncovenanted mercies of an absolute God are no foundation for the hope of an impenitent sinner. When Jehovah proclaimeth his gracious name, he, at the same time, declareth, that he (c) *will by no means clear the guilty*. And we are also told in his eternal word that, (d) *the Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit*, i. e. the guilty. Let sinners, therefore, not deceive themselves, but repent, and flee to Jesus, who alone is able to save them from *Divine Vengeance*, for, (e) *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. But,

2. Paul was not animated in the prospect of death from the consideration of his *comparative morality*. I say, *comparative*, because no mere man, since the fall, hath been able to produce that strict and perfect morality which the law requireth for the justification of its subject.

For

(c) Exod. xxxiv. 7. (d) Nah. i. 3. (e) Heb. x. 31.

(f) *For there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not.* The Apostle was in all respects virtuous in his conversation before his conversion; and he was not less so afterward, when sin became his burthen, and he delighted in the law of the Lord after the inward man. As he urged the disciples to a conversation becoming the gospel, so he appealed (g) to them for the unblameable manner in which he walked himself: And when pleading his cause before the high-priest, in a numerous assembly, many of whom well knew his manner of life, and were his avowed adversaries, he declareth that he had (b) *lived in all good conscience before God until that day.* The Apostle, therefore, had as good a pretence for boasting in his morality as any man; yet this is not the reason he assigneth for his present confidence. Doubtless, it is with great pleasure the believer looketh back on a life spent, under the influence of divine grace, for the glory of the Redeemer; and he is very thankful that he hath been enabled to walk in any good measure worthy of the Lord: But, whatever satisfaction he may take therein, this is not the ground of his courage in a dying hour. On a judicious and impartial review of the most unspotted conversation in the present state, the believer will discern those defects in his morality, which are more than sufficient

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(f) Eccl. vii. 20. (g) 1 Theff. ii. 10. (b) Acts xxiii. 1.

to make him deprecate the same, as the foundation of his acceptance with the holy God. It is melancholy to hear persons in the neglect of Christ and salvation by his blood, secure themselves in their not having wronged any man, or think they are safe because they have not been given, as too many are, to extortion, injustice, intemperance and uncleanness. An abhorrence of these evils, is essential to a sanctified mind, without which, the hopes of heaven are deceitful; but the not having lived in these enormous practices, is far from being sufficient to recommend us to *Jehovah*, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. To be kept from these gross pollutions is a peculiar mercy, but this negative righteousness will never justify depraved man from his original guilt; from the uncleanness of his heart; or from the daily transgressions, with which the best of men are more or less chargeable. And to proceed,

3. The magnanimity of the Apostle under these circumstances, doth not arise from his profession, or his obedience, as a *Christian*; nor from his sufferings, labours, or success, as a *Minister*. Once the Apostle fetched his courage from the compleatness of his profession as a *Jew*: His zeal, and his exact conformity to the ceremonial law, was his glory. But, he had long since seen this a groundless confidence, and renounced it. Nor is his hav-

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ing renounced judaism, and embraced christianity, or his obedience to the gospel, the reason he assigneth for his present boldness. *Paul* had been as zealous for the ordinances of *Jesus* since he became a christian, as he had been heretofore for the injunctions of *Moses*. Being enlightened, and having obtained mercy to believe, he did not, as some, neglect the institutions of Christ. True; indeed, we do not read of his having the sacrament administered to him, when in prison, and confined from the church of God, or that, when expecting his martyrdom, he partook of the supper as a preparation for his departure. We find no president of this kind in the sacred history. The Apostle, however, attended strictly to the order of the gospel: He could not allow himself to live in the omission of baptism, the fellowship of the saints, the breaking of bread, or any other appointment of his Redeemer, but cheerfully complied with the whole of his will; yet this, his obedience to Christ, is not mentioned as the ground of his courage. Neither is he emboldened from the consideration of his being a preacher, or even an Apostle. He knew, from the example of the *Traitor*, that it is possible for a man to sustain these characters, and yet remain an unbeliever, die in despair, and be lost for ever. In one word, it is not his great sufferings, or his abundant labours, nor the wonderful success of his ministrations,

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trations, that inspired the Apostle with this holy confidence. It is not the profession we have maintained in the sight of men, or the attainment of an high station in the church of God: It is not the having made many prayers, or the having preached many sermons; no; nor is it the having been instrumental of converting many souls, that will suffice to animate the awakened sinner, in the views of eternity: Nothing can yield true courage, and reasonable joy, in a dying hour, even to the most eminent minister of Christ, short of his having obtained like precious faith with the saints, and his being safe in the hands of that almighty Saviour, whom he hath preached to others. Accordingly, we find that the great Apostle layeth the stress of his hope on these things: *For I know whom I have believed, saith he, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* In general, we see, that Christ, who is the only sure foundation, is at the bottom of this noble courage and unshaken confidence. Paul is looking to *Jesus*, in whom he trusted; and from his acquaintance with him, and the persuasion he had concerning him, he glorieth in tribulation: yea, even in the prospect of his dissolution. In like manner the Psalmist, addressing the *Messiah*, the lord and shepherd of his people, rejoiceth, saying; (i) *Yea, though I*
C *walk*

(i) Psalm xxiii. 4.

walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Our departed friend also was favoured with a good measure of the same faith and confidence when he drew near his end.

But to return to the Text; It is evident, that *Jesus Christ* is the person intended; and, in relation to him, the Apostle expresseth three things to be the matter of his experience, and the foundation of his joy; namely, His trust in him; his knowledge of him; and his persuasion concerning him; each of which will be particularly handled in one, or more of the following heads of discourse. I proceed, therefore, as proposed,

II To set before you, what I apprehend included in the Apostle's declaring his trust in Christ, at the present juncture.

The Apostle, in this passage, declareth his trust in Christ. *Whom I have believed*, saith he, *or trusted*, as in the margin of some copies; and this agreeth with what follows, by which it is plain that he had committed something unto him. In an act of saving faith, there is a trusting of the Lord *Jesus Christ*. And we may observe, by the way, he doth not say whom I have *preached*, but whom I have *trusted*. He esteemed it a singular favour that he was appointed a preacher of *Jesus Christ*. (k) *Unto me*, saith he, *who am less than the least of all Saints*

(k) Eph. iii. 8.

Saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

And, in the verse preceeding the text, he taketh notice, with seeming pleasure, that he was appointed a preacher of the gospel: But, when he cometh to give the reason of his unshaken confidence, he sheweth another cause; namely, that of *believing Jesus* whom he had *preached*. It is better to see ourselves among the number of *believers*, than among the number of *preachers*: The latter without the former, as we have already seen, will not support the soul, when flesh and heart faileth. *Paul* was not only a *preacher*, but also a *believer*: And this gave him courage and joy in the views of eternity. Now this part of the Apostle's declaration seemeth to imply,

1. The satisfaction he had respecting the *reality* of his trust in *Jesus*. We may consider it as referring back to his first trust, or faith in Christ, and so expressing his assurance, that he had indeed put his confidence in the Redeemer. It is one thing to believe in Christ, and another thing to know that we trust him.

(1) *These things, saith the Apostle John, have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, &c.* Many of these things, the Apostle had written, are manifestly those by which the

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Disci-

(1) 1 John v. 13.

Disciples, trying themselves, might know that they were born of God, and of them who believe; and that they might rejoice in hope of eternal life. A person may truly believe, and yet be very doubtful concerning the reality and genuineness of his faith in Christ. These fears are apt to arise when under the hidings of God's face; and sometimes they proceed from weakness of judgment: Indisposition of body also may trouble the mind, and promote these doubts: But, it is highly probable, that in many instances, this suspense is owing to the Christians carelessness. Some persons live in the neglect of self-examination; they are not careful to compare their experience with the word of God, nor do they seek after the witness of the Divine Spirit, the means whereby believers come to know that they have trusted the Redeemer; and hence, they are subject to slavish fears.

However, some of the faithful, who could not be charged with carelessness, have, yet, through various temptations, been most of their life-time subject to bondage, under an apprehension that they were strangers to the faith of God's elect; and hence have frequently been ready to cast away their confidence; but, when brought into the near views of another world, the Lord hath graciously shewn them, that they have, indeed, believed. They have, then, been made sensible that they have, in truth,
laid

laid hold of the divine promise, and that having committed themselves to *Jesus*, they are safe in his almighty hands: And, it is not easy to describe the satisfaction, thankfulness and joy visible in those who are thus released: Then, they are not ashamed, though the sorrows of death compass them, but are ready to triumph with the psalmist, and say, *(m) The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear?*

Thus have I known a dying Saint, who had proceeded with trembling to the last sickness, being, then, satisfied in this great point, meet the *King of terrors* with a noble courage: A courage equal to what may have been seen in those who have lived under a steady persuasion of their faith in Christ. O, glorious sight! Happy soul! Who believeth, and also *knoweth* that he believeth in *Jesus*. Who would not wish that, whatever fears attend him in life, this may be his frame at death; Nevertheless, the believers security lieth not in his frames, whether in life or at death, but in Christ. The Apostle, however, in this declaration, sheweth that he was now under no hesitation about the reality of his trust in the Redeemer. Upon reflection, he was sure that he *had believed*. But,

2. This may include the continuance of his trust in Christ, and express his having relied upon

(m) Psalm xxvii. 1.

upon him from the time he first trusted him to this instant. *Whom I have believed*, that is, whom I have confided in all my days, never since I was first brought to the knowledge of him, and enabled to cast myself upon him. He that hath been helped to lay hold of Christ by faith, will never let him go. True faith is abiding: It is *(n)* *much more precious than gold that perisheth*. And the true christian having trusted his Lord, walks by faith in him, resting upon him in every duty, and under every dispensation. In this epistle the Apostle taketh notice, *(o)* that he had fought a good fight, that he had finished his course, and that he had kept the faith; now this he had done trusting Christ; and his declaration thereof, at the present juncture, may be considered as an acknowledgment of his having experienced the grace of his Lord, from whom he had received strength to perform these things. Thus the true believer, when looking back from the brink of eternity, is free to acknowledge and rejoice that he hath gone on from day to day, through the various scenes of life, trusting in *Jesus*, and this from the hour of his conversion to that of his dissolution. And,

3. This may also refer to the Apostle's having, in his present circumstances, by a fresh act of faith, again committed himself to the Lord. It should be the daily work of the christian, to

renew

(n) 1 Peter, i. 7. *(o)* Chap. iv. 7.

renew his confidence in his Redeemer. This he is frequently doing; and more especially, when calamities are near, (*p*) *the name of the Lord is a strong tower*, into which the righteous run and are safe. In distress, the faithful are naturally engaged to recommit themselves to their Saviour; and in no season is this experience more universal, than when, by any means, they perceive their departure is at hand. And it seemeth to me more than probable, that, in the present situation, *Paul* had, in a solemn manner, repeated his trust in the Lord, and that for this reason, among others, he might say: *I have believed*. But, once more,

4. The Apostle may be considered, in this declaration, as having respect to the end of his faith. It is the language of one who expected, instantly, to launch into eternity, and to enter upon the state of vision where enjoyment taketh place, and faith and trust are, properly speaking, at an end. His work being finished, his time for believing was over, and he was now expecting to depart, and to be with Christ: I submit it, therefore, if this view of the words may not be included, and the Apostle understood as triumphing in the compleatness of his faith and trust in *Jesus*.

Thus, I apprehend, the Apostle's declaring that he had believed, in the present juncture, may denote an assurance of his unfeigned faith
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in Christ, and the continuance of his trust in him from his conversion to this very time: It may, further, imply his having solemnly renewed his confidence in the present trouble, and it may also express his earnest expectation, of having now, as it were, finished his faith, and being about to enter on the fruition of his hope. But, I go on,

III. To explain the knowledge which the Apostle assumeth to himself, and which is proper to those who make *Jesus* their confidence. *I know*, saith *Paul*, whom I have believed. The knowledge of Christ, is essential to a rational and well-grounded confidence in him. Men may trust an *unseen*, but they cannot reasonably confide in an *unknown* object. True faith, by which the christian trusteth his Redeemer, though a spiritual and supernatural principle, is not irrational or absurd.

Now the knowledge intended in this place, must not be understood of a mere historical acquaintance with Christ, for it is a knowledge of his person; I know *whom* I have believed: A manner of expression which, in my humble opinion, at least strongly suggesteth a more intimate and certain kind of knowledge than what cometh by report: However, the Apostle must design a knowledge different from what is historical, seeing an unbeliever, or a formal professor; yea, even an open enemy

enemy to Christ, may know him in this sense: And can it be supposed that such a knowledge of Christ, could so animate *Paul* at this time? Or on this foundation, was his confidence well grounded, or his triumph reasonable? Again, This knowledge, which the Apostle assumeth in the text, is different from what is natural, or from a knowledge of Christ after the flesh. *Paul* knew Christ after this manner: (q) Christ was seen of him, that is, he had seen *Jesus* in the flesh, with his bodily eyes; and accordingly we find that he joins himself with those who had (r) known Christ after the flesh: This was necessary to his being a witness of the Lord's resurrection; and an essential qualification for the office of an Apostle, to which he was called: But, to know Christ in this sense, is neither necessary nor sufficient to saving trust in him. On the one hand, many were thus acquainted with *Jesus* when he was on the earth, who did not obtain salvation by him! They knew his person; they attended his ministry; and they frequently heard him, and conversed with him; yet, alas! they believed not on him, but perished in their sins. On the other hand, many; yea, it may be said, that all who have partook of the heavenly calling since *Jesus* ascended, have attained to the blessedness spoken of, *John* xx. 29. They have not seen, and yet have believed. We see

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then

(q) 1 Cor. xv. 8,

(r) 2 Cor. v. 16,

then that a knowledge of Christ after the flesh, is not proper to the believer, and therefore, cannot be designed by the Apostle in this place, in which he speaketh of himself under that character,

Nevertheless, there is a knowledge of Christ, which is necessary to true faith in him. (s) *They that know thy name, saith David, will put their trust in thee.* Ignorance, in this sense, and unbelief go together. What, then, is this knowledge of which *Paul* speaketh, and which is accompanied with saving confidence in the great Redeemer? Indeed, it is a kind of knowledge which is better felt than expressed, yet some description may be given of it from the divine word, which, however difficult to the carnal mind, is agreeable to the experience and hope of the saints: And, in general, let it be noted, that this knowledge is spiritual in its kind, and is the special gift of God: It is an heavenly gift of the Divine Father, and produced through the operations of the Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father, and who is sent by the Son to testify of him to the hearts of his people. Thus it is said: (t) *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true.* Observe. There is an *understanding given*, that we may know him that is true, who is expressly declared in the same verse to be

(s) Psal. ix. 10.

(t) 1 John v. 20.

be *Jesus Christ*. What can fairly be understood by this, short of the illuminations of the Divine Spirit? Our understandings are naturally dark; the Lord the Spirit, graciously condescendeth to open the eyes of the mind, and also to manifest the glory and love of Christ to the enlightened person; hence ariseth a knowledge of him; and a satisfaction in him unknown to the natural man, and of which he is not able properly to conceive. This was the knowledge of Christ, which *Paul* obtained when it pleased God to (u) call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him. A knowledge which is no fancy or imagination, but is true and substantial; and which affordeth the greatest certainty to the mind: It comprehendeth all that is essential to Christ, and is the same for kind in every renewed person, though it admitteth of degrees, and is consequently progressive.

Another property of this spiritual knowledge of *Jesus*, and by which it may be described, is this; namely, that it effectually engageth the subject to him. There is that glory and suitableness in Christ, in the view of him who is duly convinced and enlightened, which will most assuredly conquer the heart of the beholder, and bring it over to him. When Christ is revealed by his Spirit to the awakened sinner, his desires and affections are infallibly

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attracted;

(u) Gal. i. 13, 16.

attracted; and he will admire and trust this lovely Redeemer, inasmuch, that we may be certain, that they who do not love and trust Christ, are strangers to a spiritual and saving acquaintance with him. In one word, this knowledge is inseparably connected with eternal life. (x) *And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* They who thus know the Lord, therefore may know, or be assured, that they have eternal life. Now this knowledge, *Paul*, and likewise our departed friend had of *Jesus*, whom they trusted: And it is a knowledge common to the faithful in Christ.

I have only to add, under this head, that I apprehend the Apostle intendeth here an high degree of the knowledge of Christ. He speaketh like one who knew Christ by long acquaintance, having had a large experience of his grace, and much communion with him. There are, as already hinted, degrees of this knowledge among the true Disciples of *Jesus*: Some, in this sense, are better acquainted with him than others; now *Paul* knew whom he had trusted more perfectly than many, or than he himself formerly knew him. And, it is observable, that he doth not say, I know *in whom*, but; I know *whom* I have believed: The former, indeed, would have implied his knowledge of Christ's person; but the latter

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is, I apprehend, more emphatical, and seemeth to me to express the satisfaction he had in the object of his trust, in consequence of his acquaintance with him. However, this is certain, that *Paul* hereby expresseth his thorough knowledge of the Lord, and his perfect satisfaction in him.

A person may, upon slender knowledge of another, trust him with some valuable concern, but upon a more intimate acquaintance with him, be far from approving his confidence. Not so he who trusteth the glorious Redeemer: The further advances the christian maketh in the knowledge of his Lord, the greater will his affection be towards him, and the more established will his hope be in him. The Apostle found this by experience: He had a very particular and intimate knowledge of *Jesus* whom he trusted, and this, his acquaintance with him, yielded him the highest satisfaction; yea, it caused him to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But, I am now led

IV. To consider the Apostle's Persuasion concerning the Redeemer in consequence of his acquaintance with him.

The Apostle having related his knowledge of Christ, whom he trusted, proceedeth to shew his persuasion concerning him, *I am persuaded,*

faith

faith he, that is, I am well assured, or certain; for this term, especially when applied to the believer's apprehension of spiritual things, denoteth a full, and certain confidence. Thus; *Rom. viii. 38.* For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life,—nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God. q. d. I am fully assured, that it is not, nor shall it ever be in the power of any creature to separate us from this divine love. In like manner we are to understand the text, *I am persuaded*, or I am undoubtedly certain, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that Day.

Now this persuasion is not peculiar to *Paul*, but they are words to be adopted, on due reflection, by every true believer.

In opening of this branch of the text, three things demand our attention. 1. The depositum, or what the Apostle had committed to Christ. 2. The day, or the season referred to. And, 3. What it was that he was persuaded of concerning the Redeemer.

1. We are to enquire into the depositum, or what the Apostle had committed to the keeping of his Lord. Some understand this of the gospel, which he earnestly desired should be maintained in the hands of Christ after his decease; while others have thought that he is to be considered, as concerned for the welfare of the

the church, and leaving it with the chief Shepherd.

It is common to find those who have been zealous for the interest of Christ in their day, express their concern for its prosperity, when they are leaving the world: And when an affectionate minister is in the prospect of being removed from his dear charge, his request for his people, is like that of *Moses*; That the Lord would set a (y) man over the congregation, and give them a pastor after his own heart, that they be not as sheep without a shepherd. And our deceased friend, who was many years Pastor of this church, discovered the like concern in his late illness: It was remarked, by those about him, that a night or two before he died, even in the last prayer he put up in his family, that he was very earnest with the Lord for this thing. And thus it hath been often found, that faithful ministers of Christ, have employed their latest moments in commending their flock to the Redeemer. But, I think, this doth not come up to the expression, which seemeth to import the entrusting a person with some valuable thing to be restored in due time;—a sense that perfectly agreeth with what follows in the text, wherein the Apostle mentions a certain time, against which he expected to have that preserved which he had committed to Christ: But,

But, when a minister is removed by death from the care of a particular church, he can have no reasonable hope, of receiving the like charge again.

Nor do I apprehend that the Apostle chiefly, if at all, intendeth the enjoyment of the fruit of his labours, or the preservation of the seals of his ministry, to the appearance of Christ. He knew that he should receive the reward graciously promised to his labours of love, and had an earnest expectation of finding his spiritual children, a crown, and joy, in the day of the Lord. But, these things, however pleasing and satisfactory, are not the principal concern of a minister, when launching into eternity.

We are, I apprehend, to understand this of that which an enlightened person committeth to Jesus at his conversion, and which the saints have been known to recommit, by a fresh act of faith, when their departure has been near. And this is no other than themselves: Their whole persons, soul and body, are deposited in the Redeemer's hands, that they may be saved at last. What is it that the sinner, when first awakened to a sense of his lost condition, joined with a prospect of reconciliation, commits to Christ? Doth he not entrust *himself* with him, in hopes of salvation in the great day? And indeed, nothing short of having done this, and seeing himself safe in so doing, can render

tender a person truly courageous in the article of death. I conceive that *Paul*, in this declaration, hath an eye to nothing less than the compleat and eternal salvation of his whole person. And this is what the saints have in view, and for which they trust the Redeemer, when looking into the unseen state. Thus holy *Job* declareth, (z) *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* For what did *Job* trust the Lord? For his salvation; verse 16. *He also shall be my salvation.* After the same manner the Psalmist, when his flesh and heart failed, trusted in his God, saying; *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory* (a). The believer, when departing hence, committeth his soul afresh to Christ, and therein followeth his example, who, when nailed to the cross, said, (b) *Father into thy hands I commend my spirit, and gave up the ghost.* And thus *Stephen*, when on the point of expiring called upon God, saying, (c) *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* And I doubt not but *Paul*, in like manner, when ready to be offered, trusted Christ with his departing soul. Nor is the saint unconcerned about his body, which is to be left, for a season, in the grave. The hopes of the faithful in a dying hour, respecting the resurrection of their bodies to a glorious immortality, shew, that these are also

E included

(z) Job xiii. 15, 16.

(a) Psal. lxxiii. 24—28.

(b) Luke xxiii. 46.

(c) Acts vii. 59.

included in the trust they have reposed in Christ. *Job* is likewise an example of this, (d) *Though, saith he, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.* The saints, when they come to die, rejoice that (e) *this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that this mortal shall put on immortality, and that death shall be swallowed up in victory.* And for the accomplishment of this they trust the Redeemer: It is therefore expressly asserted, that he (f) *will change their vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body.* Some, indeed, think that the Apostle hath chiefly a regard to this in the passage before us: However, it is most certainly included. This may suffice for the first enquiry; namely, what that is, which the Apostle, and every true christian committeth to the keeping of the Lord Jesus: It is themselves, both soul and body, to be finally, and compleatly saved. I go on,

2. To consider the day, or the season referred to in my text. The Apostle speaketh of a day against which he was assured that Christ was able to keep that which he had committed to him. And what day is this? Not the day of his death, seeing he looked upon this to be at hand: It would have been no great matter for one that was ready to be offered, and who expected soon to die, to have this

(d) *Job* xix. 26. (e) *1 Cor.* xv. 54. (f) *Phil.* iii. 21.

this persuasion, that he should be preserved to the day of his death. Besides, in my humble opinion, this manner of speaking implieth that this day was a season when the Apostle expected to receive what he had committed, and, I cannot see how this is applicable to the day of his death. It is reasonable to understand it of the same day that is spoken of once and again, in this epistle; and this is evidently the day of the Lord's appearance, even that day when he shall give the (g) crown of righteousness to his faithful servants. This is styled a day, being an appointed season. It is emphatically called (b) *the day*, and the *great day*, to denote its importance, for it is the day of revelation; when every man's work shall be manifest: Sometimes this is called the day (i) *of Christ*, and *of Jesus Christ*, because Jesus shall then descend to judgment, and be revealed in all his glory. And, in the old testament, it is known by the (k) *day of his wrath*, the (l) *day of destruction*, and (m) *the great and dreadful day of the Lord*. Now this day, though plainly, and frequently spoken of in scripture, is but little regarded by the sinful sons of men. Nevertheless, it will surely come: And very dreadful it will be to the finally impenitent. The prophet saith, it

E. 2 will

- (g) Chap. iv. 8. (b) 1 Cor. iii. 13. Jude, 6.
 (i) Phil. i. 6. 1 Cor. v. 5. 2 Cor. i. 14. 2 Thes. ii. 2.
 (k) Job xx. 8. (l) Chap. xxi. 30. (m) Prov. xi. 4.

will (n) burn as an oven, and the wicked shall be as stubble. It is with a view to be saved at this time, that the awakened sinner first committeth himself to Christ, and this is the season when believers are given to expect their compleat redemption: A blessed hope, of which the righteous shall never be ashamed; for, (o) when Christ who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with him in glory. The saints shall then be publickly owned by the Son of Man: And the Judge, their Saviour, from his white throne, shall solemnly acquit them, and graciously pronounce them blessed; and being thus glorified, and their enemies utterly overthrown, they shall return with their illustrious head into the kingdom of the Father. But,

3. We are to consider, what that was concerning the Redeemer, of which the Apostle was persuaded, which yielded him so much satisfaction. And it seemeth that this was his *ability*. I am persuaded, saith he, that he is *able* to keep that which I have committed to him. Two things are requisite to maintain our confidence in him whom we trust, namely, his *fidelity* and his *power*. And, accordingly, the *faithfulness* of the Redeemer, is one great encouragement to the believer; he committeth the keeping of his soul to him, in well-doing, as unto a (p) *faithful* Creator, And thus

Sarah,

(n) Mal. iv. 1.

(o) Colos. iii. 4.

(p) 1 Pet. iv. 19.

Sarah, it is said, (q) *judged him faithful who had promised.* But, in the passage before us, the Apostle hath an immediate regard to the capacity of his Lord to keep him. True faith, conversing with the power of its object, animateth the believer under the sorest trials; thus Abraham, when strong in faith, was fully persuaded, that what God (r) *had promised, he was able also to perform.* The same persuasion hath every one who sincerely relieth on Christ for salvation; and hence, *Jesus is held forth, (s) able to save them to the uttermost* who come to God by him. We see, then, that it was the ability of Christ, which gave the Apostle the boldness he now discovered in the prospect of death and eternity; and he may be considered, as arguing with himself against the fears and objections which might arise under the present trial, somewhat after the following manner. “I am, indeed, in great sufferings, and in daily expectation of being slain for the sake of the gospel, nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I have committed myself into the hands of Christ, who is engaged to save them who trust him; and I make no question of his capacity, for I am persuaded that he is an able Saviour, and every way equal to my salvation. True; indeed, my reasoning powers fall short of discovering the manner in which my Re-
 ligious and civil duties are connected.”

(q) Heb. xi. 11. (r) Rom. iv. 21. (s) Heb. vii. 25.

“ deemer will save me in death, and while I
 “ remain in the state of the dead; I cannot
 “ comprehend the redemption of my body
 “ from the grave, or say by what means it
 “ will be reunited at my compleat salvation:
 “ How I shall be preserved through the dark
 “ vale, and my separate spirit sustained; or
 “ how this tabernacle, after it is dissolved
 “ to dust, and the particles thereof scattered,
 “ shall be collected, and raised a glorious and
 “ spiritual body, is beyond my power to con-
 “ ceive; but this I know; I know whom I
 “ have trusted; and of this I am no less
 “ certain, that nothing is too hard for him:
 “ He is omnipotent and omniscient, and there-
 “ fore can subdue all things to himself; he
 “ can overcome all difficulties, and, conse-
 “ quently, he can save me to the uttermost;
 “ I am, therefore, not ashamed, being con-
 “ fident I shall be brought forth in the day
 “ when he maketh up his Jewels.” Thus
 the Apostle, and thus our late Brother, en-
 couraged himself, from the undoubted *ability*
 of him whom he trusted. And this leads me,

V. and Lastly, To shew what there is in
 Christ to raise and confirm this persuasion in
 those who know him.

A true acquaintance with Christ, which is
 always accompanied with trust in him, will
 yield

yield the subject a certainty of his power to save: This persuation, therefore, as before observed, is not peculiar to the Apostle, but is common to all the faithful; and every fresh view the believer taketh of his Redeemer, confirmeth him in his confidence. Now the following particulars, fully persuade the believer, that Christ is able to keep that which he hath committed to him.

1. His *Divine Nature*, or those perfections that belong to him as the eternal, and only Son of the Father. Nothing is of greater importance to the comfort and safety of those who trust in Christ, than his true and proper Deity; and nothing is more fully and plainly revealed. The Scriptures shew that he *(t)* is God; *(u)* the mighty God, and the *(x)* man God's fellow: They declare him to be *(y)* God's own, and his *(z)* only begotten Son: They describe him the *(a)* brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. Yea, it is moreover said, that he *(b)* thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Either of these, or such-like declarations of holy writ, and much more all of them together, shew Christ to be a *Divine Person*, and this insureth his ability to save. They who have *(c)* an understanding in him that

is

(t) John i. 1. *(u)* Isa. ix. 6. *(x)* Zeck. xiii. 17.
(y) Rom. viii. 3. *(z)* John iii. 16. *(a)* Heb. i. 3.
(b) Phil. ii. 6. *(c)* 1 John v. 20.

is true, know him to be the *true God*; and, having committed themselves to him, they very rationally conclude that their eternal life is safe in his hands. I think it is clear from the passage alluded to, that they who are truly enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, know him to be the Son of God, and the *true God*. Nothing should be reported essential to saving illumination, but what is so in the scripture account, but, that to know *Jesus* to be the true God, is essential. I think is plain from the words mentioned: And I freely own that I cannot see with what propriety a person can be said to have a just knowledge of Christ, who is not persuaded of his *real Deity*. Is our Saviour, in truth, as the Scriptures declare him, the *true God* and the (d) *living God*? And shall he be flattered with having a true acquaintance with him, who is ignorant of his *Divine Nature*?

The christian trusteth not himself, for salvation, neither with men, or angels, nor with any mere creature, but with the (e) *Lord Jehovah*, in whom is everlasting strength. And when the believer vieweth his Redeemer, either in life, or at death, he beholdeth him the only begotten of the Father, in whom (f) *dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily*: And hence he is confident, that he is able to keep him against that day. Again,

2. Believers

(d) Heb. x. 31. (e) Isaiah xxvi. 4. (f) Col. ii. 9.

2. Believers know their Redeemer to be the *Creator of all things*, and hence, also, they are persuaded that he is able to save them. Is he the *everlasting God*? He is also (g) *the Creator of the ends of the earth*. (h) *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*. And this we are told extended to *heaven and earth*, and to things (i) *visible and invisible*. Thus the prophet *Jeremiah* declareth, (k) *The portion of Jacob*, which is no other than the Lord whom the faithful trust, he (l) *is the Former of all things*. Hence his saints are encouraged to trust him; for hereby they are fully persuaded that he is able to keep them. In this view of *Jesus*, *Peter* exhorteth the suffering Disciples, to (m) *commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator*. But,

3. Believers are further confirmed in this persuasion of Christ, from the consideration of his being also the *Upholder of all things*. (n) *By him all things*, saith the Apostle, *consist*; and in another place, he (o) *upholdeth all things by the word of his power*. To *Jesus*, therefore, who is the object of the believer's confidence, all created beings owe, not only their first existence and foundation, but also their continuance and order. This, together with his being *Creator*,

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proves

(g) Isa. xl. 28. (h) John i. 3. (i) Col. i. 16.
 (k) Jer. x. 16. (l) Lam. iii. 24. (m) 1 Pet. iv. 19.
 (n) Col. ii. 17. (o) Heb. i. 3.

proves him divine, and yieldeth the christian an undeniable evidence that he is able to keep what he hath entrusted with him. And,

4. The christian is further established in this important point, from the consideration of what the Redeemer hath already accomplished, and is now doing in the character of a Mediator. In this prospect, manifold testimony ariseth, to the mind of the believer, in confirmation of his Saviour's ability. They see, that he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and thereby redeemed his people from the curse of the law, and destroyed the works of the Devil; they also see that he hath raised himself from the dead; and that, being exalted at the Father's right-hand, he is alive for evermore, and pleading the virtue of the blood which he hath shed. From the last of these alone, the author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* proveth his ability to save. *(p)* *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

When the believer vieweth his Redeemer as having bore his sins, and sustained Divine Wrath for him; when he considereth his having overcome the world; endured the cross; burst the bands of death; ascended on high, and sat down with the Father; when he beholdeth him triumphing over principalities and powers, and crowned with glory: And, in

one
(p) *Heb. vii. 25.*

one word, when he looketh to the Captain of his salvation, who is made perfect through sufferings; and beholdeth him thus alive from the dead, exalted and employing himself for the safety of those who trust him; I say, when the believer contemplateth these things, he cannot doubt of Christ's ability to save him. When the Son of God was crucifying, we are told, that the unbelieving priests and scribes, mocked among themselves, saying, (q) *He saved others, himself he cannot save.* A subtle and bitter reproach! But may not the Christian take occasion, from this ignorant and malicious slander on his Redeemer, to comfort himself? May he not, now Christ hath obtained the victory, which is manifested in his resurrection and exaltation, in allusion to that insulting insinuation, of those bloody infidels, triumph, and say, He saved himself: He, therefore, can save me. And hence conclude that he is able to keep that which he hath committed to him. Again,

5. The faithful are persuaded of this upon a view of his mediatorial fulness. We are told, that (r) *it hath pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell.* This is evident from what hath been already seen: In him there is a fulness of merit and righteousness for justification and pardon; there is also in him a fulness of authority and power, and this

F 2

extended

(q) Mark xv. 31. (r) Col. i. 19.

extended to every creature in heaven and on earth: (s) All power is given to Christ; (t) Angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him. (u) Christ hath power over all flesh that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him. Hence his people may be assured that he is able to save, (x) He is exalted at the right hand of the power of God: (y) He hath the keys of death and the grave, and none is able to resist him, (z) or to wrest any out of his hands, of whom he hath taken charge. Moreover,

6, and lastly. This persuasion concerning Christ, is, in some degree, confirmed to the believer from his own experience. Paul had frequently experienced the power of Christ, to sustain him in seasons of distress, and to enable him to persevere through difficulties and temptations: He found the grace of the Lord sufficient for him, and the strength of his Redeemer made perfect in his weakness. And thus Christ's people, who live by the faith of him, experience much of his power, in many instances; from which among other things they may, and sometimes do, gather that he is able forever to keep them. And, more especially, is the believer persuaded of this, from the consideration of the power exerted

by
 (s) Matt. xxviii. 18. (t) 1 Pet. iii. 22. (u) John xvii. 2.
 (x) Luke xxii. 69. (y) Rev. i. 18. (z) John x. 28.

by Christ in his conversion : He is persuaded that nothing can be too much for him, who changed his heart, and translated him from the kingdom of Satan, and redeemed him from the dominion of sin. Upon reflection, the true Christian seeth, that his regeneration required a mighty power indeed : Nothing that lieth in the way of his future salvation, can exceed what obstructed his conversion ; and from this mighty work on his own soul, he is convinced that Jesus is able to save him. There is a passage in the epistle to the *Philippians*, not impertinent to the present subject ; *(a) Being confident of this very thing, saith the Apostle, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.* Having begun the work, his ability to finish it is unquestionable ; and therefore, we see that in this declaration of the believer's confidence, his power is taken for granted : A divine power is requisite to finish this work ; but there is, at least, as great an act of that power exerted in beginning the same, as can be necessary for its continuance unto perfection. The believer, therefore, when he considereth his effectual calling, may reasonably argue with himself after this manner : " The Lord, whom I have trusted, hath subdued my heart, when I was enmity against him ; he hath quickened me, when I was dead in sin."

(a) Phil. i. 6.

“ trespasses and sins ; and he hath rescued
 “ my once captive soul from the power of
 “ Satan, and from the bonds of iniquity ;
 “ and, surely, he that hath done these things
 “ is able to preserve me from falling again
 “ into their subjection to my ruin ; he can
 “ surely keep me in every state, and is un-
 “ doubtedly able to save me to the end.”

Thus, the divine nature of Christ, together
 with his being the *Creator* and also the *Up-
 holder* of all things, which are proofs of his
 Deity ; his atonement, and victory ; his me-
 diatorial fulness, and the instances of his al-
 mighty power, experienced by the faithful,
 especially in their conversion ; these things,
 I say, abundantly prove, to the Christian, that
 his Lord can subdue all things to himself :
 And from these considerations he is assured,
 that neither men nor devils, nor any created
 power can possibly hinder Christ from bring-
 ing about the salvation of those who trust
 in him.

No wonder then, that believers, looking to
 Jesus, are not ashamed, even in times of the
 greatest tribulation : What have they to fear ?
 Is it not highly reasonable that the Christian
 should rejoice in every state ? When he con-
 templateth his glorious Saviour, hath he not
 a solid ground of confidence that he shall ob-
 tain eternal life at his appearing and his king-
 dom ? In a word, may not the believer, with-

out

out presumption, when in the near views of death and eternity, adopt the words of this Apostle, and say; or rather sing; *(b)* *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Having considered the several things proposed, I shall make two or three reflections, and then close with a few hints concerning our late brother, whose departure we now mourn. And then,

1. This sheweth the importance of being secured in the hands of him that is able to save. They are in a dangerous condition, who being ignorant of Christ, are not provided against the day mentioned in the text. In this great and dreadful day of the Lord, he will render to every man according to his deeds: And in that day the wicked shall not stand in judgment, nor shall any Christless sinner find shelter for his guilty soul, from the wrath of the Lamb. Wo be to them who shall not be found to have trusted this Redeemer, when he descendeth from heaven, as he most certainly will, and that *(c)* *in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Some are so stupid as to be, in a manner, wholly unconcerned about their salvation: And such give no credit to the approaching judgment:

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57. *(c)* 2 Thess. i. 8.

ment: With these persons, declarations of Divine wrath, impending over the heads of sinners, and the fiery indignation that is surely hastening on the finally impenitent, are as idle tales; hence they flatter themselves in their iniquity, and despise the grace of the gospel. Unhappy persons indeed! They are rejecting the counsel of God against themselves; and continuing so to do, it will be the ruin of their precious souls.

There is a day in which (d) God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. Then Justice shall take place in the punishment of the ungodly; and we are told, that (e) *whoever is not found written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire.* O that careless sinners, who make light of their salvation by the Son of God, saw their danger! O that such were convinced of the fearful lot of those who shall be found out of Christ in the day of judgment, that, being warned, they might flee from wrath to come! But there are some others, who, though not altogether unconcerned about their eternal welfare, are, nevertheless, resting their hopes short of Christ. Alas for them also! Would to God that they likewise were convinced of the necessity of committing themselves to Jesus, and that they were persuaded that he alone is able to save them: (f) *For there is salvation in no other.*

Jehovah,

(d) Acts xvii. 31. (e) Rev. xx. 15. (f) Acts iv. 12.

Jehovah, by exalting *one* Saviour for sinners, hath rejected every *other*. And if *(g)* the Lord hath rejected our confidences, however we may flatter ourselves, we shall not prosper in them; and this will be our sad case, if we trust to any but *Jesus Christ*. Let every one, therefore, examine his confidence, that he may be found in him, who is the sole hiding-place for sinners. But,

2. This is great encouragement for sensible sinners to commit themselves to Christ. Salvation, O awakened sinner, is, indeed, equally important and difficult; but, behold *Jesus* is an almighty Saviour. He is, you see, the mighty God; and he is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. And, further, he hath an inexhaustible fulness of merit, grace and authority, to save the chief of sinners who come to him. If the Apostle, and the faithful in every generation, were not deceived, without controversy Christ is able to keep those who commit themselves to him; but, this their opinion of Christ, and consequently their dependence on him, you see, was well founded. His Deity revealed in the word, and displayed in his works of creation and providence; and the perfection of his sacrifice, demonstrated in his resurrection and glory, yield an unshaken ground for this confidence concerning the Redeemer: Who, that duly considereth these

G

things,

things, can reasonably doubt of his ability to save? Be assured, then, O fearing soul, that *Jesus* is able to save, even unto the uttermost: And shall not this engage your trust in him? O ye, that are dismayed, in the prospect of sin, the world, death and hell, fear not, but be encouraged to commit yourselves to Christ: He is *all-sufficient*: And they who believe him, shall be saved with an ever-lasting salvation. And,

3. This may induce the saints to self-examination. We should be frequently taking a view of our trust in Christ, and of his ability to save us. The Apostle, it seemeth, had been meditating on these things; and we see the advantage he obtained thereby: It animated his courage and joy in the views of eternity. Let us imitate this example, and learn to be frequently reviewing our confidence, and to consider the omnipotence and glory of him whom we have trusted. If this was our daily practice, it might prevent much shame and sorrow, when overtaken with temptations to which we are daily liable; and if christians, who are wavering were to dwell more on the contemplation of these things, I am persuaded that they would be more courageous and steady: It is indeed a subject to be regarded by all, and no less pleasant than profitable. And once more,

4. This

4. This affordeth a delightful prospect of those who are departed in the faith of *Jesus*. The safety of such is undoubted, and their happiness sure. We may, on account of what hath been said, look after such deceased friends with an holy satisfaction and pleasure, knowing, that having also trusted the same Redeemer, we shall be presented together at that day, against which, he is able to keep what we have committed to him. Then shall there be a glory revealed on the multitude of those who have believed: A glory that will fill them with unspeakable joy, and will also redound to the praise of his boundless love, and his almighty power, who hath redeemed them with his blood.

And may this comfort us concerning our friend and brother, now lately departed: He died in the same faith, and under the same persuasion with the Apostle, and of whom, therefore, we have reason to conclude, that he is entered into the rest which remaineth to the people of God. But, in relation to the deceased, I have a few things to say, with which I shall conclude. And,

His moral conduct is well known, he having lived full seventy-five years without any considerable change of abode, and may I not venture to say, among those who were intimate with him, that he was a man of sobriety and faithfulness, and that an industrious and

generous spirit run through the whole of his conversation? In generosity, he exceeded most in his circumstances, being always hospitable to the utmost of his ability. These things, though they are distinct from the Believer's confidence before God, render him valuable in life: They are virtues highly becoming the christian profession, and when conspicuous, adorn the doctrine of *Jesus*.

No discredit can arise to the Deceased, or to his Family, when, for the illustration of the divine conduct toward him, I observe, that he appeared in the world very young, being put on providing for himself when scarce arrived at the age of seventeen, and I have frequently heard him remark, that the first three or four years was a time of great affliction, through repeated threatening illness, and other trying dispensations: But, it is often seen that a lowering morning, is followed with a serene and pleasant day; in like manner it pleased God, who designed our friend for great usefulness, afterwards to smile upon him: For having obtained a confirmation of his health, and a blessing on his industry, he was helped to provide for a (b) large family, which he lived to see grow up to the third generation, and many

(b) His children, grand-children, and great grand-children, amount to the number of 178, 145 of whom are now alive.

many of whom are now his mournful survivors. May the Lord bless them from the eldest to the youngest, that, whatever is their lot in other respects, they may be found followers of their aged Head, so far as he followed Christ.

Mr. *Thurrowgood* was indulged with peculiar talents for service in his day, both in civil and also in religious life. With respect to the former, though he was trained up to no particular employ, in the manner that most youth are, yet, he turned his hand to divers occupations, with an aptness and success somewhat astonishing, and which shewed that he had good natural abilities, and also that a blessing attended the application of them. Many have had cause to be thankful for him, as the instrument of enjoying some benefits, (i) which were not to be expected from one in his station; and, I cannot forget, on this occasion, to acknowledge (k) myself an instance, for he greatly

(i) He was very successful in helping those who were afflicted with ruptures, on which account, it is thought by some, that his removal will be a great loss, and especially among the poor, who fall under that calamity, with whom he was always very tender and moderate.

(k) A damage I sustained, when at nurse, which being concealed, as I suppose, through fear, left me under an incurable lameness. The Deceased undertook to help me when I was about 14 years of age, and blessed

greatly assisted me in a case, that had been long attempted in vain, by several persons of repute, in the profession to which relief more properly belonged.

Nor was the Deceased less eminent for his services in the church of God. He was, when in his youthful vanity, by a (1) singular pro-

be God, he so far succeeded, as to enable me to walk in a more comfortable manner, than it was expected that I ever should; and this was the product of a few months.

(1) The occasion of Mr. *Thurrowgood's* first serious thoughts, was the following: Sir *William Cooper*, who, it is well known, resided at *Hertford Castle*, gave him and another an invitation to his house for some innocent recreation, and accordingly they went, but it was upon the Lord's-day. The choice of that day for pleasure, which it is to be lamented, is now grown very common, greatly offended a pious servant in the family, who, with much seriousness, remonstrated the folly of which they were guilty; and particularly addressing our late friend, endeavoured to convince him of the evil of neglecting public worship, and spending that day in sensual delights, and also exhorted him to think of his sinful condition. To these things Mr. *Thurrowgood's* attention was raised, who fell under some conviction, and being advised by the same person to hear Mr. *Hayworth*, he readily complied, and through a divine blessing, it was followed with the happy consequences mentioned.

How conspicuous are the wisdom and grace of God, when he meets with a senseless sinner, who is, ungratefully wandering from him! And should not this instance of divine goodness, encourage persons of every rank, to be ready to instruct the ignorant, and those that are out of the way?

providence, induced to go and hear Mr. Hayworth, who was then the dissenting minister at Hertford, and was so impressed by the divine word that from that time he chose to attend, and continuing under the same means, it was the pleasure of the Almighty, that he was soon enlightened and brought to that trust in Christ, which he held fast to the end. Having obtained a good hope through grace, he could not satisfy himself without observing the commands of his Redeemer, but joined to the church at Hertford, with whom he walked in a becoming manner, and (m) visibly growing in spiritual knowledge, for several years.

After some time he saw reason to alter his sentiments concerning a positive (n) ordinance, and was not ashamed to own his convictions, however it might lessen him in the esteem of some who were otherwise minded. Steadiness under a profession is very commendable, but this may consist with some alteration respecting the doctrines or duties of christianity, for in this present state of things, true disciples may have

(m) A worthy person, who was intimate with Mr. Thurrowgood from the beginning, told me, since his decease, that after his profession, he grew apace in the understanding of divine things, insomuch, that his minister would frequently advise troubled souls to discourse with him for their relief.

(n) The ordinance of baptism.

50 On the Death of
 have need of being taught the way of the Lord
 more perfectly. However, our friend, after
 careful examination, bore his testimony to what
 he was now fully persuaded to be a part of the
 gospel of Christ, by a conformity thereunto.
 Nevertheless, he continued his fellowship till
 some years after, when he became a member
 of this church, which was then under the
 care of Mr. Peake. He was soon called to
 the work of the ministry; and, being invited,
 he preached for twelve years at a (a) neigh-
 bouring village with universal satisfaction, and
 great usefulness, till the death of your Pastor,
 when, as some of you know, he was unani-
 mously chosen, and then solemnly set apart to
 that office in his stead; and this is about thir-
 ty six years ago. And, my friends, are not
 many of you witnesses, to the disinterested,
 and diligent manner, in which he hath, during
 this space, laboured among you? You who
 attend divine worship here have reason to look
 back with admiration, and to praise God for
 his kindness in continuing him so long, and
 that notwithstanding the very great distance of
 his habitation from the place of your meeting,
 he was seldom prevented; which is very re-
 markable. Remember also with what cheer-
 fulness, though not without weariness to the
 flesh,

(a) A place called *Bendish*.

self, he constantly served you; and be thankful that he was preserved in some capacity for his work to the very last. It is indeed somewhat extraordinary, that one in his advanced age, and under the grievous disorder which had for some years attended him, should, after having travelled the usual journey of ten miles, be able to carry on the public service among you which he did, and, as I am informed, with remarkable spirit; and this, but eight day before his departure;

Those who attended him in his illness, which continued but four days, assure me, that he expressed much confidence and joy in the everlasting covenant; and that he was greatly comforted by many promises he had long since embraced by faith, and which had been often the subject of his ministry. The concerns of this life, but little affected him in the views of that which is to come; and, indeed, such was his general frame and conduct all his days, that it would not be easy, to find a person on the one hand, more industrious, and on the other hand, at the same time, less anxious about worldly things; however, when in the prospect of death, he was in a manner wholly employed in contemplating his Redeemer, and rejoicing in the heritage of God's people. The last words he was heard to speak distinctly, and which

was about an hour before he went off, were the following. *Whom having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:* Which last clause he repeated with earnestness, and with seeming delight. This was near two of the clock on Monday morning, and at three he gave up the ghost. Thus died Mr. Jonas Thurroogood, in the 76th year of his age. A man under a divine blessing, very serviceable in his generation! But, it appeareth, from the subject he chose for this sorrowful occasion, that what he chiefly desired you should remark of him, was this, namely, that he was a believer in *Jesus* whom he preached, and that he departed in an assured hope of appearing with Christ in the great day. A consideration that may well satisfy the deepest mourner he hath left behind.

And now, my dear friends, the members of this church, with compassion I behold you bereaved of your under Shepherd. Your worthy Pastor is gone, and the place in which I stand, and which he so many years filled up to your satisfaction and comfort, shall know him no more! You will no more see his face, or hear the sound of his voice in this world! But, *Jesus*, the chief Shepherd, liveth, and is the same yesterday, and to day

day, and forever; be encouraged, therefore, to look to him, and to exert yourselves for his interest among you. You have heard the concern of your late minister about your welfare, even to the very last; now if you lay it to heart as he did, and have the same concern for yourselves that he had for you, nothing in your power will be wanting, that may conduce to the continuance and prosperity of your church state; and, I apprehend, that you may, then, support the gospel here. The joyful sound hath been long heard in this place, and all circumstances considered, it will be very melancholy if it should now cease. I, therefore, beseech you, in the name, and for the sake of Christ and his gospel: I beseech you for your own sake, and for the sake of the rising generation: And, if any further motive was necessary, I would also beseech you, for the sake of your deceased Pastor, who served you in love for so many years, that you would strive together in your prayers, to the Lord of the harvest, till he provideth for you. In the mean time, I intreat you to live in love and peace; and not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together: You may expect many silent sabbaths in respect of the preaching the word, before you can be fixed with a proper person; but remember that the Lord

G 2

hath

hath promised his presence with his people who gather together in his name, though they be but two or three in number; as many of you as can, therefore, meet together, though nothing more can be obtained than reading and prayer, for by this means you will keep up the public worship among you, and watch over one another in the Lord; and in so doing, you may expect a blessing. And, let me further advise you, to do your utmost for the support of a minister. It will be very extraordinary if you should find one who is able to serve you at so little expence to yourselves, as your late Pastor did. There is reason to fear, that in some places, the word of the Lord hath ceased for want of a necessary provision for a minister's subsistence, and, this, in all appearance, where the people, or at least, some persons among them, have not wanted ability: Where this is the case, it is sad indeed! But, I hope, this will not be your case, but that you will consider, that, as it is equitable in itself, so it is ordained by the Lord, *(p)* that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. Suffer me, then, to press this matter upon you: The Lord knoweth your circumstances: But this I exhort you; beware that this candlestick is not removed in consequence of your negligence

(p) 1 Cor. ix. 14:

Mr. JONAS THURROWGOOD. 55

gence or covetousness. Is there any of you who would not deny himself rather than that awful description should be given of this place. *There is no vision, and the people perish?* If any should be tempted to withhold from this cause, let them consider, that worldly substance is ill-spared at the expence of the bread of life, nor will any man's heir thank him in the end, if, for the sake of what he leaveth him, he is deprived of the means of grace, and perisheth in his sins.

To these things, I further recommend your diligent enquiries after a fit man to serve you in the Lord, and, in one word, while you are unsettled, take heed that you know with you engage, at any time, to preach among you, lest you become a prey to disorderly men, and persons of a bad conversation, who, whatever specious shew they make, are the most pernicious enemies of the cross of Christ, and who, wherever they prevail, are the bane of a christian community.

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of covetousness. Is there any of you who would not deny himself rather than that awful description should be given of this place? There is no vision, and the people perish. If any should be tempted to withhold from this cause, let them consider, that worldly substance is ill-spent, the expense of the bread of life, nor will any man's heir thank him for the loss of what he has given.

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